T
F
423 firmed it by selling plots of State land to small farmers year by year.

T
F
651 At the same time the rate and the method of taxation remained arbitrary, and the whole system had become
661 thoroughly corrupt. The High Commission of Enquiry into Property Taxation (1878-1880) discovered widespread abuses in every province. Agricultural production was suffering, and some form of equalisation was becoming an urgent necessity. But first of all a new survey had to be carried out, more scientific than that of Mohammed Aly, which was too legalistic in its distinctions.

E
F
659 In 1892 the Survey Department, under the direction of English engineers, undertook the immense task of demarca-
423 tion. After due consideration of roads, canals, and natural
651 boundaries, the land of each village area, called *zimam*, consisting on an average of 2,000 feddans, was divided into sections (*hôds*) of 50 to 100 feddans of equal value and quality (with a variation of no more than 50%) and marked off by iron boundary-pegs. The cadastral plan of the village was drawn to a scale of 1 : 25,000 for all agricultural areas, then plot by plot on a scale of 1 : 2,500. It defined every *hôd* with its serial number and taxable value. The village site was shown as a single area and exempted from taxation. The survey register annexed to the plan gave for each plot in the *hôd* its position, its area in feddans and kirats, the exact tax and the owner's name (14).

E
F
651 The work was completed in 1907, but in 1899 the Govern-
134 ment already had sufficient data to establish a general rate of taxation, which was fixed at 28.64% of the revenue from the land, determined by its mean rentable value. The scale was fixed for 30 years.

This average, based on the estimates of Egyptian committees, takes into account the nature of the soil, its content of salt, sand and water, its distance from the Nile, and still more such factors of human geography as facility or difficulty of irrigation, the level of cotton production, proximity to town or village, the length of time for which it has been under cultivation, the availability of labour, communications and police, the balance of supply and demand ; in a word, the factors which make the price of a feddan vary between L.E. 40 and L.E. 180. Twenty-two different categories of land have thus been established, and the rate of taxation,

643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

635 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts: the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (72).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer sub-
466 ject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters.
671 There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the
636 fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (73). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and
[651 taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah
681 is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows
731 how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has
661] suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to
[453] keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

123.

Unfaithfulness.

×539 622 661 Šēḫ el-balad is the mayor or head of the village. This office still exists, although much of its power has been transferred to the ʿomde, another of the magistrates of the village.

Minni lē, minni lē,
ya-bnaiye? u-rdēti lē?
Šēḫ baladi wanaʾul-lo ē?
iddāni iš-šabbē, ṭaḥant ʿalē!

"Why dost thou shun me, why dost thou shun me,
My little maid? And why hast thou dealt so ill?"
"He is the shēkh of my village, and what can I say to him?
[231] He loaned me the buffalo-calf and I have ground with it!"

3. How could I, a poor girl, refuse the great man?
4. "Moreover, I was under obligations to him." The mills are often turned by buffaloes.